

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 IO-13 NRC-05 ERDA-05 /088 W
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R 281715Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7238
INFO COMICEDEFOR
CINCLANT
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 0590

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, IC, US, NATO
SUBJECT: FONMIN REAFFIRMS HIS VIEW THAT US-MANNED BASE SHOULD
GO - IN STAGES

1. SUMMARY. IN UNUSUALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD TERMS, FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON TOLD PARLIAMENT APRIL 26 THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORS TERMINATION OF US-ICELAND DEFENSE AGREEMENT AND WITHDRAWAL IN STAGES OF US-MANNED ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE (IDF). AGUSTSSON QUALIFIED COMMENTS ONLY TO EXTENT OF SUGGESTING THAT US MIGHT RETAIN LANDING RIGHTS IN ICELAND FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT AFTER IDF DEPARTS. THOUGH HIS REMARKS CAN BE LOOKED ON AS ONLY REFLECTING LONG-STANDING PROGRESSIVE PARTY DOCTRINE, AGUSTSSON OMITTED EVEN LIP SERVICE TO CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL DEFENSE POLICY SUPPORTING RETENTION OF IDF DESPITE FACT HE WAS RESPONDING TO OPPOSITION MOTION AS RESPONSIBLE MINISTER. FONMIN COUPLED COMMENTS ON IDF REMOVAL WITH SOMEWHAT CONVOLUTED EXPLANATION OF WHY HE STILL FAVORS CONTINUED
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NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR ICELAND. AMBASSADOR PLANS TAKE UP WITH AGUSTSSON LATTER'S REMARKS ON BASE ISSUE AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING IN DEBATE ON PEOPLES ALLIANCE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ICELAND'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO AND ABROGATION OF DEFENSE PACT, AGUSTSSON SAID HE STILL HOLDS

VIEW HE HELD AS FONMIN IN 1971-74 LEFTIST GOVERNMENT, NAMELY THAT ICELAND SHOULD REMAIN IN NATO, BUT DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD BE REMOVED IN STAGES (WHICH IS ALSO LONG-STANDING POSITION OF AGUSTSSON'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY.) HE SAID THAT WITH DEFENSE FORCE GONE, US MIGHT BE ACCORDED LANDING RIGHTS FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT BUT DID NOT OTHERWISE QUALIFY HIS POSITION ON IDF DEPARTURE.

3. AGUSTSSON THEN WENT ON TO RECOUNT IN FAMILIAR TERMS HOW COLLAPSE OF LEFTIST COALITION IN 1974 AND INABILITY TO FORM ANOTHER ONE HAD REQUIRED SHELIVING OF EARLIER PLANS FOR REMOVAL OF IDF. AT SAME TIME, HE ADDED, ICELAND-US MOU OF 1974 WAS PROVIDING FOR FURTHER QUOTE ISOLATION UNQUOTE OF DEFENSE FORCE FROM ICELANDIC COMMUNITY.

4. REGARDING NATO, AGUSTSSON SAID HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN FAVOR OF ICELAND'S MEMBERSHIP. NATO CONTRIBUTES TO WORLD BALANCE OF POWER, FONMIN OBSERVED, AND THIS BALANCE IS PREREQUISITE FOR PEACE. CONTINUING IN HIS RESPONSE TO PEOPLES ALLIANCE CHALLENGE, FONMIN POINTED OUT THAT ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY CHAIRMAN BERLINGUER SUPPORTED NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR THIS REASON. AGUSTSSON WENT ON TO NOTE THAT SOVIET DEPUTY FONMIN ZEMSKOV HAD TOLD HIM DURING RECENT VISIT (REYKJAVIK 558) THAT EXISTING POWER BALANCE HELPS PRESERVE PEACE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO PEOPLES ALLIANCE ALLEGATIONS THAT
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NUCLEAR WEAPONS WERE STORED AT KEFLAVIK (REYKJAVIK 533), AGUSTSSON STATES HIS CONVICTION THAT THERE WERE NO SUCH ARMS IN COUNTRY.

6. PEOPLES ALLIANCE MP GILS GUDMUNDSSON, WHO INTRODUCED RESOLUTION AND LED OFF ALTHING DEBATE, DRAGGED OUT SEVERAL FAMILIAR PA ARGUMENTS AGAINST BASE PRESENCE AND NATO MEMBERSHIP. HE ALSO PUT UNUSUAL STRESS ON PORTED PART PLAYED BY DEFENSE FORCE PERSONNEL IN ICELAND'S GROWING DRUG PROBLEM. IN WHAT CAN BE SEEN AS OPEN APPEAL TO PROGRESSIVE PARTY, GUDMUNDSSON TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT PA WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY THAT OPPOSES IDF PRESENCE REGARDLESS OF THAT PARTY'S POSITION ON NATO.

7. INDEPENDENCE PARTY MP GUDMUNDUR GARDARSSON, SPEAKING FOR HIS PARTY, DENOUNCED BOTH ELEMENTS OF PA RESOLUTION. CITING IMPORTANCE OF ICELAND TO ATLANTIC DEFENSE AND GROWING SOVIET MILITARY MIGHT IN AREA, GARDARSSON SAID

IP SUPPORTS ICELAND'S NATO MEMBERSHIP AND ITS PARTICI-
PATION IN WESTERN DEFENSE COOPERATION. NEUTRALITY
WOULD NOT INSURE ICELAND'S SECURITY, GARDARSSON SAID;
COUNTRY'S CLOSE TIES WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH
AMERICA DEMAND THAT IT CAST ITS LOT WITH THESE NATIONS.

8. COMMENT. PA MEASURE, OF COURSE HAS NO CHANCE OF
ADOPTION. IT WILL, IN FACT, PROBABLY DIE IN COMMITTEE
WITH END OF CURRENT ALGHTIN SESSION NEXT MONTH. DEBATE
ON RESOLUTION WAS, HOWEVER, OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST
SINCE AGUSTSSON'S PERFORMANCE ILLUSTRATED MAJOR POLICY
CLEAVAGE IN COALITION GOVERNMENT. ON ONE HAND, FONMIN
ENUNCIATED WELL-KNOWN PROGRESSIVE PARTY DOCTRINE EVEN
THOUGH ISSUE HE WAS ADDRESSING AS FOREIGN MINISTER
WAS ON OF GOVERNMENT POLICY. ALTHOUGH THAT POLICY
CALLS FOR RETENTION OF IDF, HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO
DEFEND IT, NOR DID HE SUGGEST WHAT IMPACT OF IDF WITH-
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DRAWAL WOULD BE EITHER ON ICELAND'S SECURITY OR THAT OF
NATO. TO THE CONTRARY, HE EXPRESSED DESIRE TO BE RID
OF BASE IN MORE CATEGORICAL TERMS THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME
UNDER CURRENT COALTION. AS FOR AGUSTSSON'S RATHER BIZARRE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 0590

INVOCATION OF BERLINGUER AND RANKING SOVIET
OFFICIAL IN DISCUSSING HIS BACKING FOR
NATO, MOST CHARITABLE EXPLANATION IS THAT (AS MFA
OFFICIAL LATER TOLD US) HE HAD NOT PREPARED TEXT OF
HIS SPEECH IN ADVANCE. IT IS MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER,
THAT FONMIN WAS TRYING TO PUT HIS LEFTIST CREDENTIALS
IN ORDER WITH EYE TO NEXT ELECTION.

9. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER WAS NOT
PRESENT AT ALTHING DEFENSE DEBATE. IF HE HAD BEEN,
IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT HE WOULD HAVE SPOKEN
DEFINITELY FOR GOVERNMENT ON ISSUE. ON OTHER HAND,
THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT PRIMEMIN'S
PRESENCE OR COMMENTS WOULD HAVE CONSTRAINED
AGUSTSSON. INDEPENDENCE PARTY OFFICIAL DAILY
MORGUNBLADID TODAY TOOK FONMIN TO TASK EDITORIALY
FOR LATTER'S REMARKS. PAPER STRESSED INCONSISTENCY
BETWEEN AGUSTSSON'S EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR PRESERVING
BALANCE OF POWER AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO SEVERELY
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UPSET THIS BALANCE BY OUSTING DEFENSE FORCE. END
COMMENT.

10. AMBASSADOR PLANS TO RAISE FONMIN'S ABOVE COM-
MENTS WITH HIM AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. AMBASSADOR
HAS TOLD PRIME MINISTER'S RIGHT HAND MAN ON
SECURITY MATTERS, BJORN BJARNASSON, THAT HE FOUND
FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS QUOTE EXTRAORDINARY
UNQUOTE GIVEN IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE HE WAS
ADDRESSING AND THAT HE WOULD BE ASKING MINISTER WHAT THEY
MEANT. BJARNASON SMILED AND SAID: QTE THEN TELL ME UNQTE.
BLAKE

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